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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 2 February 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. BYUNG YONG SOH (Republic of Korea)
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Somavía (Chile), Mr. Byung Yong Soh (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued) (E/1992/65/Add.1; E/1993/2 and Add.1, E/1993/8)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the provisional agenda for the organizational session contained in document E/1993/2 and Add.1.

The provisional agenda was adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the draft resolutions, contained in paragraph 1 of document E/1992/65/Add.1, which the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia had recommended for adoption by the Council.

Draft resolution I: Frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Draft resolution I was adopted.

Mr. MARKS (United States of America) said that his delegation had supported the adoption of the draft resolution on the understanding that its sixth preambular paragraph meant that its provisions had no financial implications additional to the budgetary provisions currently applicable.

Draft resolution II: Establishment of a Statistical Committee within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Draft resolution II was adopted.

Draft resolution III: Permanent headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Draft resolution III was adopted.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to a number of resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the relevant paragraphs of which were summarized in paragraph 2 of document E/1992/65/Add.1. In

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conclusion, he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General contained in that document.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had concluded its consideration of the question of regional cooperation under agenda item 2.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO FOLLOW UP THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (E/1993/12, 14 and 15)

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development expected to work in close cooperation with the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services. The necessary arrangements would be made to ensure that there was a clear-cut division of tasks.

The current session of the Council was an important one since, in addition to the decisions which it must take on the themes for the high-level and coordination segments for 1993 and on the programme of work of the Council for the year, the Council would be called upon to establish the Commission on Sustainable Development and to elect its initial membership. He welcomed the interest shown by Governments in becoming members of the Commission, which once again underscored the firm intention of Member States to take an active part in following up the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). He hoped that Governments seeking membership in the Commission would be represented at a high level, as that was crucial to the success of the Commission's work.

The Council also needed to adopt decisions on the participation of intergovernmental organizations, the European Community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the work of the Commission. The latter's work could not fail to be enhanced by close association with the numerous NGOs whose interest and involvement in UNCED had made a major contribution to the success of that Conference. The future of sustainable development could be secured only through the building of partnerships among nations, between North and South and among all members of society whose decisions shaped the economy and the environment.

(Mr. Desai)

In his report on the high-level advisory board on sustainable development, the Secretary-General viewed the board not only as a source of advice for himself and intergovernmental bodies on issues related to the environment and development, but also as a mechanism for building support for and an understanding of the Organization's work in that area among the constituencies and groups represented by the board's members. The board could therefore be seen as a crucial instrument for strengthening and facilitating the work of the Commission and the Council.

In his note on the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General suggested 12 February as the date for the election of members of the Commission, in order to give regional groups more time to negotiate their respective lists of candidates. He also suggested that the organizational session of the Commission should be held from 1 to 3 March 1993, in order to allow time for the representatives of the States elected to the Commission to make the necessary arrangements to travel to New York. The report dealt with two possible scenarios for the first substantive session of the Commission. A number of Governments had indicated informally that they would prefer that session to be held before the regular session of the Council. If the Council were to agree, the Commission could meet from 13 to 25 June, although those dates would overlap by one week with the session of the UNDP Governing Council.

In his report on the Commission's rules of procedure, the Secretary-General dealt with the issue of participation in the Commission's work by intergovernmental organizations, the European Economic Community and non-governmental organizations. His proposals on that subject closely followed the recommendations of UNCED and the guidelines provided by the General Assembly. With regard to non-governmental organizations, the Secretary-General proposed that the Council should grant Roster status to any non-governmental organization that had been accredited to UNCED and that demonstrated its continuing interest in participating in the work of the Commission. He suggested a number of steps that non-governmental organizations themselves might take to organize their work on sustainable development and their relationships both among themselves and with the

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Commission. Furthermore, since current arrangements governing the relationship between the Organization and NGOs in the economic and social field were 25 years old, the Secretary-General suggested that the Council might wish to undertake an overall review of those arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the United Nations, in particular through UNCED, over that period.

Lastly, in his report on the high-level advisory board, the Secretary-General proposed that a roster of experts should be established to provide technical advice to the board, the Commission and the Council. The expertise thus made available would provide a useful pool of professional specialized knowledge to enrich the work of the board and of intergovernmental organizations.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND ITS PREPARATORY PROCESS (E/1993/13)

Ms. SADIK (Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund) said that General Assembly resolution 47/176 on the International Conference on Population and Development had marked an important stage in preparations for the Conference. The debate and negotiations that had preceded its adoption had highlighted the growing interest of the international community in the Conference. Several key aspects of the preparatory process, however, needed to be clarified at the earliest opportunity and, as Secretary-General of the Conference, she was grateful that the Council was able to address those issues at its organizational session.

Preparations for the Conference had been gathering pace over the past two years. Six expert group meetings and two regional population conferences had already been held and their reports would be disseminated shortly. Such activity at the expert and regional levels was a very important part of the preparatory process. It was also important for the full intergovernmental community to focus on the issues to be addressed by the Conference. She therefore welcomed the proposal to bring forward by one week the second session of the Preparatory Committee which, if held barely one year before the Conference, would be unable to resolve key aspects of the preparations for the Conference. In addition, the starting date originally suggested for the second session meant that the session would overlap by a full week the first

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substantive session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a convention on desertification, to be held at Nairobi. Since both the session of the Preparatory Committee and the desertification negotiations were of major importance to many delegations, such an overlap should be avoided. She hoped that two full weeks could be allocated for the meetings, since it was necessary to receive from delegations very clear instructions as to the required outcome of the Conference, agreement on the interrelationships between the issues being addressed, and clear guidance as to how the final documentation was to be drafted by the Secretariat.

Similarly, she supported the proposal that the third session of the Preparatory Committee should be scheduled for two weeks in April 1994. The Council should, however, consider carefully whether two weeks at that time would be sufficient to negotiate all aspects of the Conference's outcome and the related issue of a fourth session of the Preparatory Committee, possibly in June or early July 1994.

The Conference was being prepared at a time when there was a clear understanding of the role which non-governmental organizations could and should play in international activities of the type with which the Conference was concerned. Agenda 21 of UNCED, particularly its chapter on the strengthening of the role of NGOs, was an important indication of that new relationship. During UNCED, NGOs had been given the opportunity to participate fully in the work of the Preparatory Committee but had not been involved in the intergovernmental negotiating process. A similar approach should be adopted in the case of the International Conference on Population and Development in order to further strengthen cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental communities. Each had a distinct contribution to make and it was important not to confuse their roles or to see them as interchangeable.

General Assembly resolution 47/176 provided very clear guidance on non-governmental organizations and their involvement in the Conference. It referred, most appropriately, not only to the experience of UNCED but also to that of earlier United Nations population conferences. At both the 1974 and the 1984 population conferences, a flexible approach had been adopted for the

(Ms. Sadik)

relatively small number of NGOs involved. The interest generated by UNCED had altered the scale of NGO involvement in the 1994 Conference, however, and the subject of population was currently seen as perhaps more relevant and topical. She welcomed that development and hoped that the same spirit of cooperation and partnership which had characterized earlier population conferences and UNCED would be a feature of the Cairo Conference and its preparatory process.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS TO SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COUNCIL, AND CONFIRMATION OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS (E/1993/2/Add.1 AND E/1993/9

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the note by the Secretariat contained in document E/1993/9 and to the addendum to the provisional agenda of the Council (E/1993/2/Add.1), in which the Council was called upon to elect members to complete the term of office of the former Czechoslovakia in the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Executive Board of UNICEF and the Governing Council of UNDP. In a letter dated 12 January 1993, the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that the Group had endorsed the candidature of the Czech Republic for the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Executive Board of UNICEF. Since the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled, he would take it that the Council wished to declare the Czech Republic elected a member of the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Executive Board of UNICEF, for the unexpired portions of the terms of office of the former Czechoslovakia, with immediate effect.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that in the letter to which he had just referred, the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that the Group had endorsed the candidature of the Slovak Republic for the Commission on the Status of Women and the Governing Council of UNDP. Since the number of candidates corresponded to the number of seats to be filled, he would take it that the Council wished to declare the Slovak

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Republic elected a member of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Governing Council of UNDP, for the unexpired portions of the terms of office of the former Czechoslovakia, with immediate effect.

It was so decided.

BASIC PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COUNCIL (E/1993/1 and Add.1, E/1993/7)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to a non-paper prepared and circulated by the Secretariat which contained a number of draft proposals concerning the matters before the Council at the current session. Such a paper, which dealt only with issues upon which a consensus appeared to be emerging, would provide a useful basis for further informal consultations.

Mrs. CASTAÑO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/92, had recommended that the Council should consider the theme "World Summit for Social Development" at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1993. The Group of 77 believed that the Council should formally welcome that recommendation, as that would enable it to play a decisive role in the formulation of guidelines and decisions conducive to the success of the World Summit.

The Assembly had decided that the Summit, to be held early in 1995, should have as its objectives the enhancement of social integration, the alleviation and reduction of poverty and the expansion of productive employment. The success of the Summit would depend on the willingness of Member States and the supporting organizations to adopt the economic and political focus which those objectives required. Lack of social cohesion, poverty and unemployment were merely the outward symptoms of underlying economic and political problems. Accordingly, a global social development strategy would be viable only if it was designed to address the grave economic imbalances that currently existed and to promote appropriate political decisions in the sphere of international cooperation. The involvement of multilateral financing institutions in those decisions was also vital.

With regard to the coordination segment of the substantive session of 1993, the Group of 77 believed that three themes were of primary importance. The first was science and technology for development, which constituted the basis of independent development for any society. In particular, the

(Mrs. Castaño, Colombia)

coordination of the activities of the various United Nations bodies which promoted science and technology in developing countries should be considered. The Council could thus make a significant contribution to enhancing the Organization's efficiency in that area. Secondly, the Group of 77 drew attention to the need for humanitarian assistance to be oriented towards rehabilitation and reconstruction. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182, humanitarian assistance should not be limited to emergency programmes, but should be integrated effectively into development strategies. Lastly, the Group believed that efforts by the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to combat diarrhoeal diseases and malaria, which affected millions of people in the developing world, required better coordination.

With regard to the operational activities segment, the Group of 77 believed that it should be devoted to the follow-up of General Assembly resolution 47/199. That resolution gave the Council a broad mandate to resolve major issues arising from the triennial policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations development system. Accordingly, it did not seem appropriate to select specific topics for that segment.

The Group of 77 would participate constructively in the adoption of decisions relating to preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. In particular, the Group would seek to establish a timely calendar for the remaining meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. It would also seek to ensure that the rules governing the participation of non-governmental organizations enabled those organizations which were relevant to the objectives of the Conference to make a substantial contribution. Such rules should show due respect for the decision-making authority of Governments.

Mr. FRIIS (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the theme "World Summit for Social Development" should, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/92, be taken up at the high-level segment. The strengthening of coordination, particularly with regard to emergency assistance, warranted further discussion. The operational activities segment should be devoted to the implementation of General Assembly

(Mr. Friis, Denmark)

resolution 47/199. Two additional themes should also be considered, namely, the implications for the United Nations development system of the shift to national capacity-building, and the question of the newly independent States.

Mr. MARKS (United States of America) said that his delegation wished to ensure that the Summit was devoted to social development and reform and that it did not address issues which could be dealt with in other forums. The high-level segment would be the first opportunity to define the Summit's focus. In the coordination segment, the Council must seek to provide policy guidance and to ensure that the topics which it selected were appropriate for consideration by the General Assembly. For those reasons, his delegation had proposed theme (i) of draft decision II, as contained in the non-paper, which dealt with the coordination of United Nations activities in the implementation of the Global Programme of Action on international cooperation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. His country had been instrumental in the establishment, some years earlier, of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, and believed that it would be appropriate for the Council to review the achievements made and the problems encountered by the Programme. Another important question was that of coordination among the various human rights mechanisms, special rapporteurs, and so on.

Mr. KAARIA (Observer for Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, agreed that the high-level segment should focus on the World Summit and that the coordination of humanitarian assistance should be discussed during the coordination segment.

Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation noted with satisfaction the consensus emerging with regard to the major theme of the high-level segment. While joining that consensus, his delegation proposed that the theme should be reformulated as follows: "The role of the United Nations in promoting social development, in particular, in the context of the World Summit for Social Development". With regard to the consultation segment, his delegation hoped that the previous year's experience, which had

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

been fairly successful, would be taken into account. Several of the themes proposed in draft decision II of the non-paper were of interest to his delegation, especially themes (i), (ii) and (iii).

Mr. SUGANO (Japan) said that while his delegation also supported the major theme proposed for the high-level segment, it believed that the Council must address the substantive aspects of social development and not just preparations for the Summit. Accordingly, Japan supported the Russian proposal to reformulate the theme. With regard to the coordination segment, his delegation believed that narcotic drugs and humanitarian assistance were appropriate themes, as they involved coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system. His delegation was also prepared to accept theme (ii), entitled "Science and technology for development", in view of the interest expressed by developing countries.

Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that her delegation agreed with the United States of America that the high-level segment should not become bogged down in organizational details; the Russian proposal could help to avoid that. With regard to the coordination segment, her delegation supported theme (iii), entitled "Coordination of the humanitarian assistance programme of the United Nations, including its efforts for reconstruction, rebuilding and development".

Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that her delegation, like the majority of Council members, believed that the World Summit should be the major theme of the high-level segment. At the same time, China believed that, as recommended in General Assembly resolution 47/92, the questions of social integration, poverty alleviation and productive employment should be closely linked to the question of social development and that concrete action should be taken. With regard to the coordination segment, China supported the proposal by the Group of 77 concerning the theme of science and technology. It also agreed that humanitarian assistance should be one of the themes considered, with the emphasis placed on reconstruction.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.